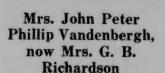
Oakland Branch First Organized in the California Mission







Dr. John Peter Phillip Vandenbergh, First Counselor



Joseph Nattress, First President, Oakland Branch



James Peter Jorgensen, Second Counselor



Norman B. Phillips Clerk



Mrs. James Peter Jorgensen

THESE ARE THE SIX WHO WERE PRESENT WHEN OAKLAND BRANCH WAS ORGANIZED ON OCTOBER 2, 1892

OAKLAND BRANCH OLDEST IN CALIFORNIA MISSION

There have been four distinct and independent movements of Latter-day Saints in California.

The first to come were the passengers on the ship Brooklyn, who left New York and came by way of the Horn and Hawaiian Islands, under the leadership of Samuel Brannan, arriving at Yerba Buena, which later became San Francisco, in July, 1846, almost a year before Brigham Young arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

The next group was the Mormon Battalion which arrived in San Diego early in 1847. When they were mustered out, several of them went north and procured employment from Captain John A. Sutter, and were present when Marshall discovered gold at Coloma in the mill race which they were digging for Sutter.

The third group, consisting of approximately five hundred souls, was the contingent sent out by the Church in 1851 to colonize San Bernardino. This group was strong enough to be organized into a stake, and Amasa Lyman was the first president thereof. They were called back to Utah in 1857 when the Latter-day Saints were having their trouble with the Federal Government and the territory was invaded by Johnston's army.

The fourth movement had its beginnings in Oakland, and marks the origin of the California Mission and of the nine Stakes of Zion now flourishing in California.

Each of these movements is a story all its own, and cannot be further pursued now, save for a brief mention of some of the facts relating strictly to Oakland Branch.

"During the latter part of the eighties," writes Orson F. Whitney, in Eldredge's History of California, "Elders J. W. Pickett and Mark Lindsay, who had removed from Utah to the Coast, were directed by Presi-

dent Wilford Woodruff, the head of the Church, to call on the Nethercott family in Oakland (Alfred A. Nethercott, father of the late Charles J. Nethercott, and grandfather of Trueman, Rebecca, and the several other Nethercotts now residing in the Oakland Stake) they having written, requesting that missionaries be sent to them. As a result, several members of that family were baptized. The Nethercotts had a friend, Norman B. Phillips, in the south end of the state, and through the instrumentality of Elder Lindsay, this man and his wife also came into the Church." (Brother Phillips' conversion and the part he played in the early mission activities is another story still, full of human interest. It might be interesting in passing to note that Brother Phillips came from Massachusetts to California in 1882 because of his poor health. That was over fifty-four years ago, and he is still going strong.)

John Luther Dalton, from Ogden, was the first regular missionary called to California. He arrived in the Bay Region in August, 1892, and immediately proceeded to look up the Latter-day Saints in this vicinity. Soon he was holding meetings at the home of James Peter Jorgensen and his family, then residing in Fruitvale.

After a few weeks they rented a lodge hall on Washington Street, between 13th and 14th streets, and here on the first Sunday of October, which was the second day of the month, 1892, the Oakland Branch, with six members, the same number as the Church was originally organized with, was founded. The original six were Joseph Nattress, Dr. John Peter Phillip Vandenbergh, his wife Harriet (now Mrs. G. B. Richardson of San Francisco), James Peter Jorgensen, his wife Flora Indiana Angelica Rasmussen Jorgensen, and Norman B. Phillips. Brother Nattress became the president, Brothers Vandenbergh and Jorgensen, respectively, his first and second counselors.

and Brother Phillips the clerk, leaving the two sisters to constitute the audience. Of the original members, all lived in Oakland except Dr. Vandenbergh and his wife, who resided in San Francisco.

They continued to hold their meetings at the hall mentioned until December, 1892, when they moved to Thomas Hall on 23rd Avenue. A few months later Dr. Vandenbergh, who was a retired physician, then about seventy-five years of age, and well to do, offered them the use of a large room in a business block owned by him at 523 6th Street, in San Francisco, free of charge, which was accepted, whereupon the meeting place was changed in March, 1893 to that location. The Branch continued to be known as the Oakland Branch, however, until the following August, when by action of the Branch Priesthood, the name was changed to San Francisco Branch. They met in Dr. Vandenbergh's building until December. 1893, when they moved to Academy Hall, 927 Mission Street, the site of the present San Francisco Chronicle Building, where they remained until May, 1894. Then they moved to a little chapel at 29 11th Street where they remained until October of that year, then moving back to Academy Hall. There they were located until May, 1895. Their next headquarters was 909 Market Street, the present site of Hale Bros.

Brother Nattress returned to Utah early in 1893, and a short time thereafter Frank Greenwell became president, and Morton M. Mortensen, assistant president. The latter became the president a short time later, and served in this position for a number of years. Brother Phillips continued to serve

In 1897 it was decided to hold meetings again in Oakland for the benefit of the members on that side of the Bay, whereupon Brother Phillips was appointed the Presiding Elder. They still continued to be

(Continued on next Page)

THE MESSENGER

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"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple."—Mal. 3:1.

Vol. 7 JANUARY, 1937

ANNOUNCEMENT

No. I

There will be a ward reporters' meeting in the stake president's office every Wednesday evening at 7:30, commencing December 30, 1936. Ward reporters should bring in their new items each week.

MUSIC FESTIVAL

The annual Music Festival sponsored by the Stake M. I. A., was held December 20 in the Oakland Chapel. Invocation was offered by W. King Driggs. The program began with a candlelight service by the Dimond ladies chorus, followed by choruses from Berkeley, Oakland and Elmhurst. The Mormon Male Chorus also rendered several numbers. Other numbers were a vocal solo by Mrs. Rhead Richards, a reading by Mrs. Clyde Summerhays and a combined chorus of all choruses present led by Esther Jenson concluded the program. Frank Parsons offered the benediction. Norma Bryon, Carlton Driggs and Grace Richards were accompanists.

VALLEJO TO SEND HER FIRST MISSIONARY

Vallejo has been planning on this farewell for a year or at least ever since King E. Bagley decided he would be glad to accept a call when his time for retirement from the Navy came this December.

Brother Bagley is still a young man, now retired on government pension, because he entered upon his duties as a pharmacist at the youngest age acceptable.

His greatest life interest has long been the Restored Gospel. For six months he has labored as a stake missionary under the local presidency of Henry Neering. Now he is to leave for a foreign mission to Great Britain.

And so it comes about that Vallejo is much agog over her first missionary farewell. It comes Tuesday evening, January 19, 1937, in the Vallejo meeting place. Of course, all friends are invited.

Oakland Branch, Oldest in California Mission

(Continued from Page 1)
a part of the San Francisco Branch. Their

meeting place was the same hall in which the Branch was originally organized. Things ran along in this way until the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. Shortly thereafter the Oakland Branch was reorganized, with Norman B. Phillips as president. J. B. J. Hawkley and Cato Dixon, first and second counselors, respectively, and David S. Williams as clerk. Brother Phillips' counselors changed from time to time through the years he served as president, and included William A. Williams, J. M. Osborne, Enoch J. Hunt, and W. Aird Macdonald. (The last name hints we are now getting into modern times.) Brother Phillips served as president until the spring of 1920, when the Oakland Branch was reorganized, with W. Aird Macdonald as president, and Willard D. Ellis and J. Edward Johnson, as first and second counselors, and Hugh P. Anderson as clerk. Brother Johnson served as a counselor a short time only, when he returned to Utah, whereupon William F. Everett became the second counselor in his place. Brothers Macdonald, Ellis, and Everett, therefore, constituted the Oakland Branch presidency on July 10, 1927, when the San Francisco Stake was organized, and

From the time of its organization until about 1920, Oakland Branch continued to remain a little branch, where the people drew near to each other. Then new Latterday Saints began to come in from everywhere. The increased numbers led to the organization of new Sunday Schools throughout the territory comprising the branch. These in turn developed into inde-pendent branches of the California Mission with no connection with Oakland Branch, save that they continued to look upon the Oakland Branch as their mother, and Brother Phillips and President Macdonald as their fathers. Among these were Richmond, Elmhurst, Dimond, Berkeley, and Alameda. The story of their organization and development will appear in later issues

The Oakland Branch, through the years, had its ups and downs, naturally. They were often put exceedingly hard to it to meet the small rental they had to pay. Some moves were made in order to get quarters within their limited means. Sometimes indiscretions of members got into the newspapers, and added to the prejudice which already existed in a high degree against the Mormon people.

Carl G. Maeser, the second president of the Mission, succeeding Brother Dalton, pitched in with all his enthusiasm to bring the Californians to the gospel. As the representative of the Church in the mid-Winter Fair in 1893, he had a great opportunity

J. Edward Johnson W. Glenn Harmon

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Federal Reserve Bank Building 400 Sansome Street, San Francisco Phone GArfield 4810 to present the Church's case. So far as he was able to ascertain, however, he and his associates had not brought a single person into the Church. Even he, strong as he was, became quite discouraged, and is said to have recommended to the General Authorities that the Mission be closed.

When his work as president was completed, and his successor, Henry S. Tanner, had arrived to take his place, and he was impatient to get back to his home in Utah, he was further detained, due to a railroad strike.

There are many incidents of real heroism, of triumph under most trying conditions, involving the members and officers of the Branch, which space does not permit even allusion to now. We of a later day, however, find ourselves possessed of a sort of sacred regard for those who carried on when the Branch was small and weak. Who doubts in the least that God has a rich reward in store for Brother Phillips! Who is there who does not feel to emulate the faithful, steadfast, Morton M. Mortensen! Despite all discouragements, the program of the Lord seems always to have a way of working through, be His servants ever so humble. And are not they to be counted blessed, indeed, who have had a hand in furthering it, be it ever so little?

J. EDWARD JOHNSON

the San Francisco Stake was organized, and the Branch became a part thereof. - ko C-C- Corrected without D-Ellis a short line From the time of its organization until about 1920, Oakland Branch continued to BAPTISMAL SERVICES

By joint agreement of all concerned the following new procedure will be followed commencing with the baptisms, February 2, 1937.

1. The person or parents of children to be baptised should secure a recommend to bring to the baptismal service, Oakland Chapel, at 7:30 p. m. on the Saturday preceding Fast Day each month.

2. No one should expect to be baptised

who does not bring the bishop's recommend.

3. The services will be conducted under the direction of the Stake Mission. There will be at least one missionary ready to baptise any one for whom the bishops have not provided otherwise.

4. Bishops are at perfect liberty as heretofore to designate priests or others from their wards to baptise members from their respective wards.

5. Suitable music and preaching will be provided and all efforts made to conduct the Stake Baptismal service in a dignified, reverential and impressive manner.

STAKE MISSIONARY NEWS

Oakland Stake's first Investigators' Meeting will be held Sunday, January 17, 1937, at the Berkeley Chapel. he ward is being covered with special circulars and a good attendance of friends and saints is expected.

Unusual colored films of archeological proofs of the truth of the Book of Mormon will be shown. The Mormon Male Chorus will furnish the music. The visitors will be shown through the new chapel at the end of the services.

All this will follow a Missionary Conference which begins at 2:00 o'clock. All stake missionaries will be heard in brief reports and testimonies. The male chorus will furnish the music. Saints generally are invited to share this Conference session because experience has shown that it is one of the spiritual treats of the year.

FASTING AND OFFERINGS

JANUARY, 1937

Our church leaders have called upon Church members everywhere to observe the law of fasting and offerings. At the beginning of the New Year no better resolve can be made than that of following the counsel of the Church Authorities and responding to their requests.

At a recent general conference, President George F. Richards of the Council of Twelve presented the following: "Fasting and offerings have been associated closely always. I will read to you a few words from Isaiah on this subject. He goes on to tell that the people's fasting was not acceptable and tells why. Then he says:

"'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

"'Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

"'Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

"'Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.'... Isaiah 58:6-9.

"The offerings, according to Isaiah are naturally a part of the fast, and help to make the fast acceptable to the Lord. We ought to get that fixed in our minds.

"Tithes, offerings and fasting—a restoration in these days. What does it mean? In the early rise of this Church there was established, as a restoration, this principle of fasting and giving offerings for the poor. One day each month was set apart. The members of the Church were asked to abstain from eating two meals of the three which they are accustomed to having, and to give the value of what they would save by the fast, for the support of the poor. If we had observed this fully and faithfully, brethren and sisters, there would have been ample in the Church, from that fund alone, to take care of all who are in need of assistance."

Ward Teacher's Message for January, 1937

RICHMOND CHAPEL PROGRESSING Anyone able to work on the Richmond

Chapel may render real assistance by reporting with a little help at this time. It is suggested all the Priesthood quorums of the Stake make it a project to have every member donate at least a day to Richmond Ward.

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OAKLAND

Our Bishopric express their appreciation for the fine cooperative spirit among our ward workers this past year. Let's keep up the good work.

The M. I. A. gave a very successful Christmas party on December 22—a short program and games were enjoyed. Old Santa was present with gifts and refreshments were served.

Claire Brown and Eva Harker, Beehive leaders, entertained their class members at a lively Christmas party at the home of Miss Brown Tuesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Glen Gee and family spent Christmas week in Marysville and Gridley visiting relatives.

The Primary officers and teachers send out the warning that they are out for first place among the organizations. They will bear watching.

Our children's dance, held December 23, proved such a huge success that many requests have come in asking for more like it. The Primary promises another in the near future.

The Genealogical Society has a very active and inspirational year of work planned for 1937. A new junior class is being organized and the senior class will study "The Progression of Man." If you know anything of our genealogy work, you will know you can't afford to miss this, and if you don't, you should get started.

Sister Irene Bastow, our Relief Society president, reports an active month of service. Twenty-three baskets were delivered to the less fortunate. May the women of this Ward partake more freely of the joy of service, by standing behind this organization in its undertakings.

Our Primary officers and teachers claim the honor of being the first of our ward organizations to know the "Articles of Faith" one hundred per cent. Their motto is, not to ask of the children anything they themselves can not do. A good one we'll say.

Mr. and Mrs. Glen Watts and family of Portland spent Christmas day at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Bagley.

Mr. and Mrs. Heber Brown are rejoicing over the arrival of a baby boy.

Mary Rex was a recent visitor in Oakland on her way to her home in Honolulu, after a three-months' stay in the States.

Mr. and Mrs. James Gain announce the engagement of their daughter Minnie to Clifford Bagley. Congratulations!

I. B. N.

M. I. A.

The Oakland Stake M. I. A. sponsored a Christmas ball held at the International House Tuesday, December 29. Joaquin Grill's Orchestra furnished the music.

VALLEJO

The marriage of Miss Helen Ann Chesshire and B. Wells Shurtleff was solemnized December 2, at 8:00 p. m. at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin G. Cheshire, President J. Myron Telford performing the ceremony before the immediate families and a few close friends.

They left later for Ogden, Utah, where they will make their home.

Mrs. Shurtleff served as organist of the Vallejo Branch for the past six years and leaves many dear friends who wish them well.

The Vallejo Branch M. I. A. gave a Christmas Party Tuesday evening. A program was enjoyed after which Santa Claus appeared and distributed candy to the little ones.

King E. Bagley, former Branch clerk, in Vallejo and a Stake Missionary has been released from all Branch activities and is spending the Christmas Holidays with his daughter in the South, prior to his departure for a Mission to Great Britain.

The Relief Society gave a party Tuesday December 22. A Josh Christmas tree and dainty refreshments were enjoyed by all.

The Vallejo Genealogical class has finished its 1936 lesson course, "The Way to Perfection," and has purchased "The Progress of Man," which is the outlined lesson for 1937.

Next Monday evening being social night, a Josh Christmas Party will be given at the home of A. Dairl Hill.

RE BAPTISMS

Baptismal services are held once a month at the Oakland Chapel on the Saturday night before Fast Sunday. Everyone wishing to be baptized should be sure to get a recommend from their Bishop before coming for baptism. It is the order of the Church that every person wishing baptism should go to his or her bishop and get a recommend

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WARD NEWS

HAYWARD

November 29, branch conference was held under the direction of President Macdonald. In addition to President Macdonald, Elder Nathan G. Tolman of the High Council and Elder John C. Stirrat, President of the High Priest Quorum were present. Reports were made by the presiding officers of all auxiliary organizations which indicated a healthy condition of the branch and of increased activity over last year.

The following changes were made in the Branch Presidency and auxiliary organizations: Clarence W. Lesser was released as First Counselor in the Branch Presidency because his work prevented him from acting in that capacity. Owen L. Stewart formerly second counselor was sustained and set apart as first counselor and Glen C. Rounds, formerly superintendent of the Sunday School was sustained and set apart as second counselor. Wilford T. Webb, formerly President of the Y.M.M.I.A., was sustained and set apart as superintendent of the Sunday School. Thomas C. Auger was sustained and set apart as President of the Y.M.M.I.A.

The following are recent arrivals in the Branch:

Ernest W. Olsen and wife Edrie and daughter Marilyn, formerly of Weston, Idaho; also his brothers, J. Leo, and Hyrum Ellis, also of Weston. They are welcome additions to the branch as each of them is taking an active part in the branch.

Thomas C. Auger, his wife Bessie (nee Summerhays) and daughter Bessie Rae, formerly of Burlingame Ward, S. F. Stake; Nephi E. Christensen and family, formerly of Richfield, Utah; Rosella Nelson, formerly of Richmond, Utah, are also newcomers in

Porter C. Webb and family have moved to San Francisco Ward of San Francisco Stake, where they formerly resided.

Two young members of the branch were recently united in the bonds of wedlock, Vera, daughter of Clifford E. and Sarah Johnston, and Arthur Herbert Wells, son of Arthur H. and Armorel Wells. The couple are now residing in Richmond, California, where Mr. Wells is employed.

BERKELEY

Mr. and Mrs. Victor Lindblad and son Bobbie, and Ruby Mitton spent Christmas with relatives in Logan, Utah.

Among those who returned to spend Christmas vacation in Berkeley are Elsie Johnson, Isabel Banning, Tom Banning and Katherine Smith.

Heber J. Austin, former Stake president of Idaho Falls Stake, visited with Bishop A. D. Ericksen a short while Saturday.

The annual Christmas tree and Santa Claus party was held Tuesday, December 23, sponsored by the M. I. A., Sunday School, and Primary.

On the evening of December 11, the Berkeley Ward M Men were given the responsibility of conducting a Christmas ball. Leon Baer, Joics Stone, and Sidney Feller were in charge.

Gwen Wright of Idaho Falls was the house guest of Miss Olga Lott for one week. Thursday, December 17, Miss Helen Caine was hostess at a party in honor of Miss Wright. Alma Deane Ericksen and Ione Casto were co-hostesses at an informal party, Sunday evening, December 20, also in honor of Miss Wright.

Mr. and Mrs. Von T. Ellsworth are entertaining Mrs. Ellsworth's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lott, from Idaho, for the holidays.

Miss Emily Merrill held open house for her many friends on Christmas Day.

On Christmas Eve, about forty young people of the Berkeley Ward went caroling, later adjourning to Miss Bertine Stout's home for refreshments.

RICHMOND

We are pleased to learn that on account of a new arrangement in his position, Wallace C. Anderson, our first counselor in the Bishopric, will hereafter be able to join us on Sundays.

Bishop Arthur L. Hopkins left by plane December 21 for Soda Springs, Idaho, where he was called by the illness of his mother, Emma Christiansen Hopkins. Although he arrived there the same evening, it was to learn that she had passed away that morning. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bishop Hopkins at this time.

Sister Naomi Layton and son Herbert are spending the holidays with relatives in Salt Lake City.

The 9th of November marked a big event in the lives of one of our families. On this date, Jack H. Bradeson and Mae Virginia Fuller were joined in wedlock by Bishop Arthur L. Hopkins. This date also was the 33rd wedding anniversary of the groom's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Bradeson, as well as the birthday of Mr. E. L. Bradeson. Other members of the family having November birthdays were honored and gifts were showered in great abundance. Supper was served to forty guests.

The Sunday School and M. I. A. joined forces in giving a very successful Christmas party for children and adults, December 22. Santa Claus handed fruit and candy to each one of the large crowd present. After an hour of games and entertainment for the children, dancing began for the older groups.

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